

PART I
CHAPTER 1
PLAN CONTEXT

A range of geographic, historical, environmental, demographic, social and economic conditions exert pressures upon the Denton area for change. This one-chapter part reviews the context in which Denton must plan for its future.

REGIONAL SETTING

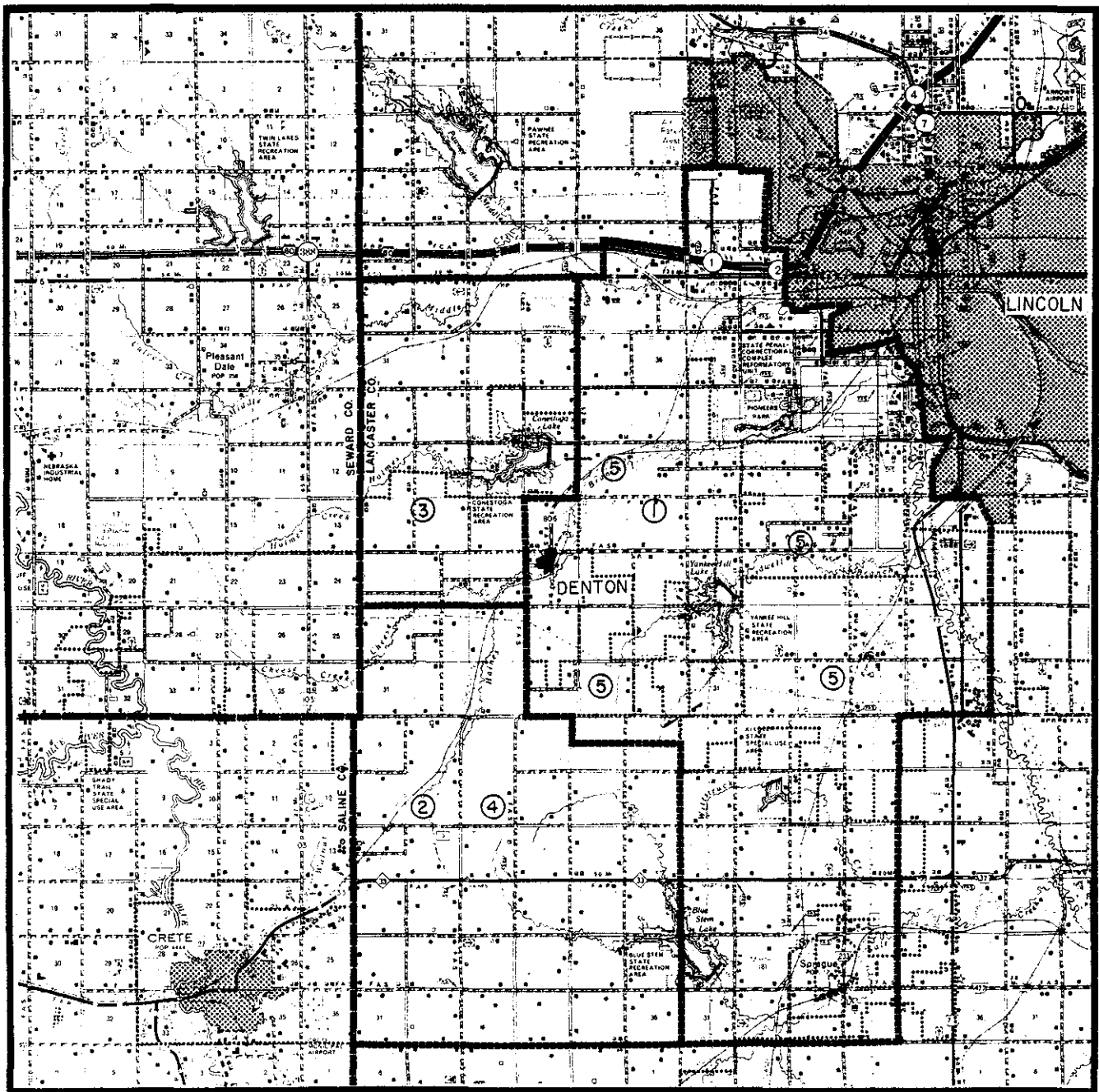
The Village of Denton is located southwest of Lincoln, Nebraska in Lancaster County. Denton is located within a metropolitan area as defined by the Federal Government--The Lincoln-Lancaster County Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The City of Lincoln is the focal point of this metropolitan area. Lincoln has over 90% of the total population and is located at the geographic center. Lincoln is the seat of City, County, and State Government. With downtown Lincoln only 12 miles away, Lincoln exerts a major influence upon Denton in terms of employment and services.

The area surrounding Denton remains primarily in agricultural use. Recently there has appeared some non-farm development, typified by residential acreage development. Two State Recreation Areas are located near Denton--Conestoga Lake is located two miles north and Yankee Hill Lake is located three miles east of Denton.

Many public services are provided to the Denton area by special purpose agencies. Denton and the area generally west, as shown on Map 1, are provided public school services by the Crete Consolidated School District No. 2, with high school and now elementary school facilities located in Crete 12 miles southwest. North and east of Denton are a number of Class 1 school districts. Fire protection is provided in Denton and area east by the Southwest Rural Fire Protection District and in other areas by the Pleasant Dale and Crete districts as shown on Map 1. The Denton area is in the Salk Creek Watershed and under the jurisdiction of the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. Electricity is served directly to retail consumers by Norris Public Power District. These public services are outside the direct control of the Village of Denton.

Denton must plan for its future within this regional area. Local strategies for physical and economic development and improved commercial and public services must relate to this larger regional context.



———— Fire Protection Districts

----- School Districts

① Southwest

④ Crete No 2

② Crete

⑤ Unconsolidated

③ Pleasant Dale

Map 1
REGIONAL SETTING



HISTORY

Denton takes its name from D.M. Denton, an early settler in the area. Mr. Denton had the town of Denton platted for the sale of lots for development. The plat was filed for record on August 1, 1871.

A branch of the Nebraska City-Fort Kearney Trail passed near Denton. Ruts are still visible in a pasture 2 miles south of Denton.

Denton was on the main cattle-driving trail from Texas to northern pastures. E.C. Abbott, son of an early Denton area settler James Abbott, writes of his adventures in his book, We Pointed Them North:

The summer of 1878 I ran a herd of beef for some men in Lincoln, and took them up on Cheese Creek-that was the last open range in that country. They limited me to 500 head so the cattle would do well but they paid me 25¢ a head a month and for four months. I got \$125 a month out of it. That was big money for a boy in those days when usual wages ran as low as ten dollars. In the fall these fellows sold their cattle to feeders in the eastern part of the state and I took them down there, driving them right through the streets of Lincoln. When my father got over here in 1871 the Texas Trail had only been in existence three or four years but it was a big business already and a steady stream of herds was moving north. I have been told that 600,000 cattle came up to eastern Kansas and southeastern Nebraska in 1871. Lincoln being then the north end of the trail because there were no ranches above that point; only Indians and buffalo. The B & M Railroad had got to Lincoln and you could graze and ship the beef that was going to eastern markets but most of the cattle were being sold in small herds to stockmen and settlers.

A postoffice was established in 1878. A number of businesses had opened by the 1900's, including a grocery, creamery, bank, lumber yard and two elevators. Denton incorporated in 1913 and had a population of 145 in 1920. In 1929 a fire destroyed many businesses - and the bank closed in the Great Depression of the 1930's.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Denton, like many Nebraska communities, initially developed to serve the near-by farming community. It performed the economic, social, and service functions needed by the farm population as well as its own.

The declining need for farm labor, improvements in transportation and communication and changes in scale efficiencies in retailing, manufacturing and service industries--both public and private¹--have produced profound changes in small rural communities.¹ Rural populations unable to find employment in rural towns moved to larger towns where job opportunities were expanding.

Improvements in transportation and communication resulted in the extension of the trade areas of the larger towns and cities into the areas once served by villages. These same improvements have allowed rural people to commute farther to jobs and to some extent permitted industry to decentralize.

Today, Denton functions as part of, and is dependent upon, the larger metropolitan economic system. Of those responding to the Attitude Survey and indicating where they worked outside the home 87.3% are employed in Lincoln and only 7.8% in Denton. In addition, most all commercial services are obtained in Lincoln. After considering the dilemma of small towns in their attempt to maintain their economic viability and a desirable employment base, a Federal publication² made the following observation: "The most fortunate small town may therefore be the one which can benefit from an industrial growth city within commuting distance and yet retain the rural life-style which makes it attractive to its existing residents".

Although Lincoln will continue to be the economic focal point of the region, Denton should strive to maintain and supplement its local business activity. In addition to providing needed services and employment, commercial and industrial activities can make contribution to the local tax base beyond their costs for municipal services. The Attitude Survey and the Development Goals indicate a support for attracting new businesses.

¹ The Effect of Town Size and Location on Retail Sales, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, Iowa State University, January 1976.

² Revitalization of Small Communities: Transportation Options, U.S. D.O.T., December 1975.

As Denton continues to plan for its future, it should consider possible strategies for attracting new commercial and industrial development. Denton should recognize the possibility of new industry being attracted to the Denton area and plan for such a possibility.

POPULATION

Population forecasts provide a basic yardstick for comprehensive planning. Forecasts help determine space requirements for future land-use activities and capacity needed for future community facilities and services. Consideration of population trends and characteristics and evaluation of factors affecting future population change will assist in forecasting future population.

Population Trends and Characteristics

As a small farm community, Denton had a population of 145 according to the 1920 U.S. Census of Population. Denton's population declined to a low of 94 in 1960. Since then Denton's population in a relative sense has risen quite dramatically--over 60% increase in 10 years to 151 in 1970 and a local estimate of 175 in November 1976.

The trend in Denton, for some time now, has been towards a younger population and smaller household size (see Table 1 and Table 3). The decrease in population per dwelling unit has been dramatic; from 3.5 in 1960 to approximately 2.7 in 1976.

TABLE 1
AGE CHARACTERISTICS

	<u>1970¹</u>			<u>1976²</u>
	LANCASTER CO. (excluding Lincoln)	LINCOLN	DENTON	DENTON
0-24	47.7%	49.6%	47.0%	45.5%
25-44	25.4	22.6	23.2	29.9
45-64	18.0	17.7	20.5	17.2
65 & Over	8.9	10.1	9.3	7.5

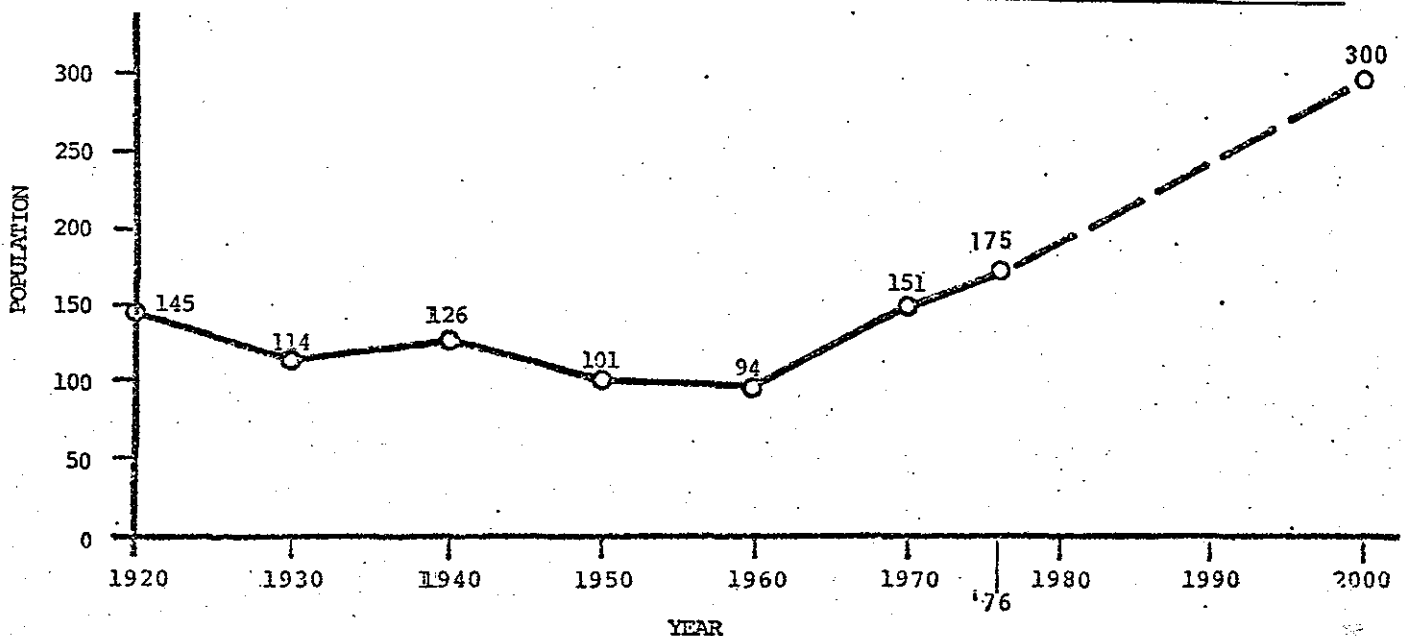
¹ U.S. Census
² Attitude Survey

Factors Affecting Future Population

There are two basic factors affecting future population; (1) natural population change (births minus deaths) and (2) migration. Natural population change in Denton, either up or down, is not likely to be significant. Migration will depend upon a variety of factors including the following:

- Federal rural development and housing policies*, which translate into programs that encourage individuals and families to locate in rural communities like Denton. The Farm Home Administration is currently subsidizing interest costs of housing for low and moderate income that meet their standards in communities of less than 10,000 population.
- Overall county growth*, which affects growth potentials within the communities themselves. The regional planning study forecasts major growth for the county to the year 2000.
- Attractiveness of the village as a place in which to live*, could influence future decisions on housing location. Denton could offer an attractive option to those desiring a small town, semi-rural living environment.
- Local attitudes concerning future growth*, measure how receptive the village will be to new development. Most area residents favor some future growth, provided the community's traditional "village" characteristics can be maintained. According to the response from the attitude survey, the median total population favored for the year 2000 was 200-300.
- The costs of public improvements to serve new development*, influence the financial feasibility of future growth. New development will increase demands on water, sewer, and other utilities, and require extensions of other community services. The costs of providing these support services suggest a gradual rate of future growth.
- Land suitability*, determines the appropriateness of the community for new development. The recently adopted Development Goals call for new development in areas contiguous to existing development. Natural and man-made characteristics determine how suitable this land will be for new development. However, availability of these lands depends largely on individual landowner decisions.

GRAPH POPULATION TREND AND FORECAST



Projections for the future population of Denton in the year 2000 were developed in two recent studies.

--The Bureau of Business Research at the University of Nebraska, forecasts population for Nebraska counties and incorporated communities on a statewide basis in 1973. Low, medium and high figures were projected for Denton-- 275, 315, and 370 respectively for the year 2000.

--The Planning Department, assisted by Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc., prepared estimates on a countywide basis in 1974. A year 2000 population of 315 persons was estimated for Denton.

Target Population

Based upon an evaluation of factors affecting future population and the relation between current population estimate of 175 and recent population projections a year 2000 target population of 300 for Denton has been chosen.

The Plan should respond to the land-use, transportation, and community facility implications of this population, but it should also be flexible enough to accommodate minor fluctuations either above or below the target figures. If significant fluctuations do occur the target population should be revised and the Plan should be reviewed with a view toward the implications of a new target population.

NATURAL CONDITIONS

Natural conditions, including flooding, topography, soils, and natural vegetation, influence the physical form of the Denton area and the directions which future growth should take.

Flooding

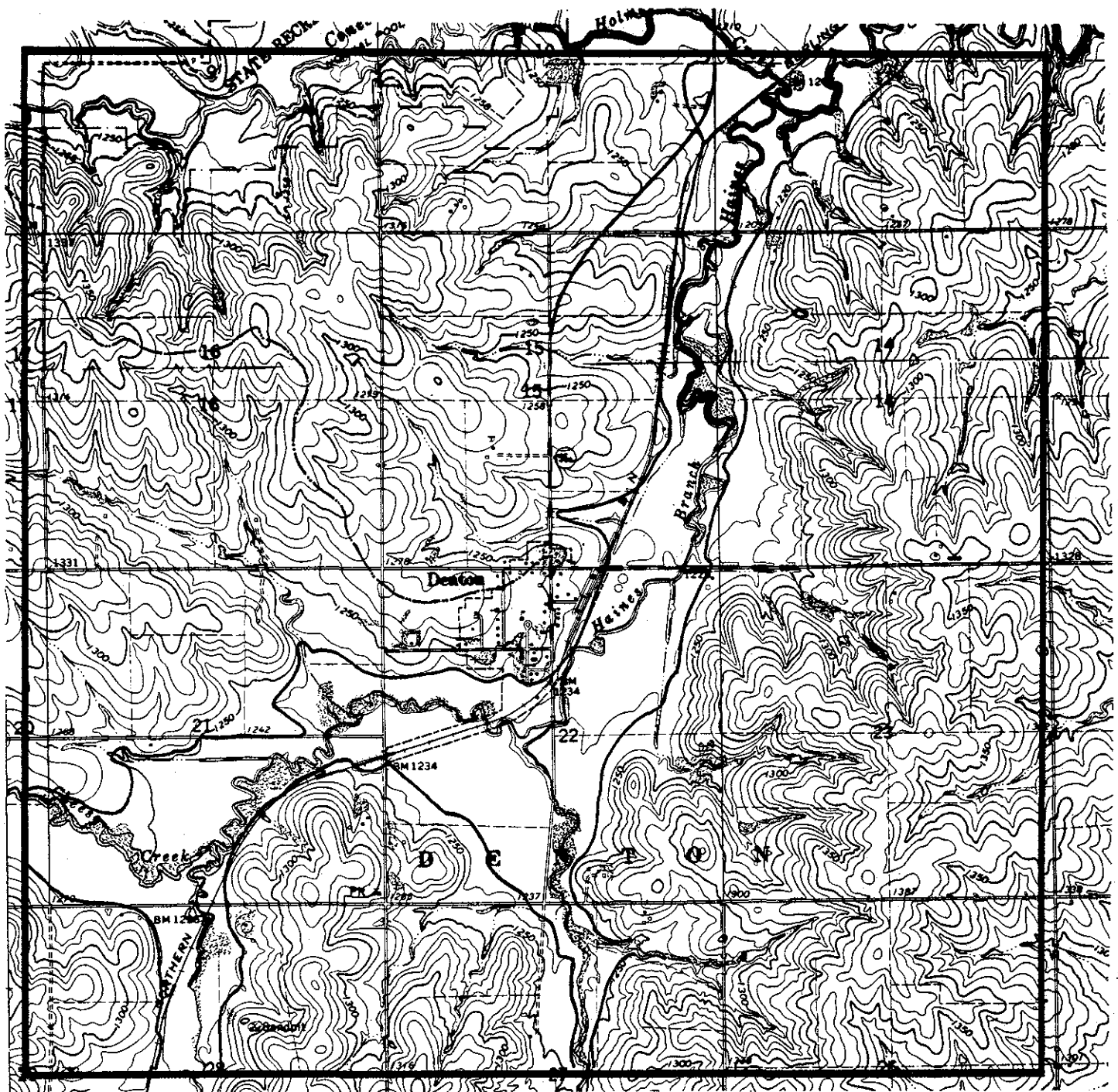
Haines Branch (of Salt Creek) flows from southwest to northeast bordering Denton on the south and east. Located down-stream and in other drainage basins, the two nearby State Lakes, north and east, have no impact upon potential flooding in Denton. Early proposals had called for an empoundment upstream from Denton on Cheese Creek -- it was never built. The Lower Platte South Natural Resource District has stated that it may initiate studies to determine the feasibility of providing an additional flood control reservoir in the vicinity of Denton.¹ The U.S. Geological Survey has prepared an outline of the area likely to be flooded by storm water once every 100 years, the 100 year flood, or as designated by the U.S. Geological Survey, the "flood prone area", and shown on Map 2.





With the enactment of the National Flood Insurance Program, federal policy has changed from one of reducing the flood hazard, which incurred considerable public costs both in the form of flood control projects and disaster relief, to a policy of discouraging development of the flood prone area. The program provides subsidized insurance to existing development in or adjacent to the flood prone area. New development in the flood area is either prohibited or must be undertaken only in a building program that incorporates extensive flood-proofing measures. With one house, the sewage lagoons and the potential for new development in the flood prone area, Denton should consider participating in the National Flood Insurance Program. Ideally, only low-intensity uses such as agriculture, open space and recreation should be designated for the flood prone area.

Topography

Topography varies in the Denton area: from the nearly level terrain of the area generally subject to flooding along Haines Branch; to the gently sloping to very steep terrain of area south and east of the flood area. Denton and the area north and west have a nearly level to gently sloping terrain.

¹ One & Six Year Plan, Lower South Platte Natural Resources District, March 1976.



-  Contour Lines (elevation above mean sea level at 10' intervals)
-  Significant Drainage Divides
-  Flood Prone Area
-  Tree Masses

Map 2

NATURAL FEATURES



Topography does not impose any specific development constraints upon development in village or to north or west (development south and east is constrained by the flood prone area.) However, an important implication of topography relates to the drainage area available for gravity flow sewer collection systems. If development occurs much further north of Denton, it will be too low in elevation to be served by simple gravity flow extension of Denton's existing sewer system.

Soils

Soils have varying capabilities for supporting different development. While test borings are required to evaluate specific building sites, generalized soil interpretations are useful in identifying potential development problems. Soil limitations including soil mapping units in the Denton area are illustrated on Map 3 and Table 2 and are briefly discussed as follows.¹

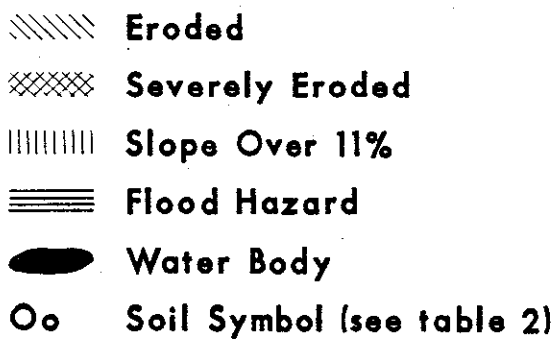
Kennebec, Colo., and Nodaway soils are not suited to community development because of the potential for flooding. These bottomland soils have been formed by a history of flooding and generally occur within the area designated as the flood prone area by the U.S. Geological Survey. These soils are best left to agriculture, wildlife and recreation. If developed, buildings and utilities should be protected from potential flooding.

Burchard and Steinauer soils over 11% slope and Sharpsburg and Steinauer soils in the Sharpsburg-Steinauer mapping unit (Rb) and Sharpsburg and Pawnee soils in the Sharpsburg-Nodaway-Pawnee mapping unit (Bp) are not well suited to community development because of steep slopes. These soils are best left natural. If developed, site planning is critical.

All other area soils are suitable for community development provided precautions are taken. All soils except Dickerson have a high or moderate shrink-swell potential causing foundations to crack if adequate reinforcing and drainage is not provided.

With the exception of Dickinson and Judson soils, found in only limited amounts, local soils present severe limitations upon the use of septic tanks because of slow

¹ Soil mapping and interpretation information are based on USDA Soil Conservation Service data. Soil surveying in Lancaster County is being accelerated with funding from the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District.



Map 3 SOIL LIMITATIONS

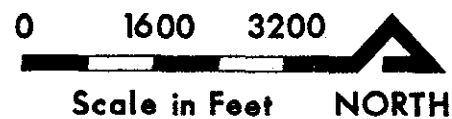


TABLE 2
SOIL CHARACTERISTICS

SYMBOL MAPPING UNIT	NAME	SLOPE ¹	LOCATION	SHRINK- SWELL POTENTIAL ²	PERMEABILITY ³
Sh	Sharpsburg	2-6%	Upland	High	Slow
Wt	Wymore	1-11%	Upland	High	Slow
Pa	Pawnee	2-7%	Upland	High	Slow
Me	Mayberry	2-7%	Upland	High	Slow
Mr	Morrill	6-11%	Upland	Moderate	Moderate-Slow
Dc	Dickerson	6-11%	Upland	Low to Very Low	Rapid
Sm	Shelby	6-11%	Upland	High	Moderate-Slow-Slow
Br	Burchard	6-15%	Upland	High	Moderate-Slow
St	Steinauer	6-30%	Upland	Moderate	Moderate-Slow
Rb	Sharpsburg-Steinauer	30-60%	Upland	(See individual soils)	
Bp	Sharpsburg-Nodaway-Pawnee	3-30%	Upland & Bottomland	(See individual soils)	
Ju/Jf	Judson	2-6%	Footslope	Moderate	Moderate
Ke/Kf	Kennebec	0-2%	Bottomland	Moderate	Moderate
Co/Cp	Colo	0-2%	Bottomland	High	Slow
Sn	Nodaway	Channelled	Bottomland	Moderate	Moderate-Slow

¹ Percent of rise over run

² Measure of displacement due to changes in moisture content of soil.

³ Rate of Transmittal of Water:

0.06 to 0.6 inches per hour considered slow

0.6 to 2.0 inches per hour considered moderate

2.0 to 20.0 inches per hour considered rapid

percolation, steep slopes, and flooding. Centralized waste water treatment for future community development should be required.¹

In terms of agricultural suitability, the most productive soils are Kennebec and Judson, followed by Colo and the more level Sharpsburg and Wymore. Soils with steep slopes, over 11%; and Nodaway soils, soils characterized by deeply cut meandering drainage courses; are not well suited to cultivation and should be left to wildlife and grazing.

Local soils are not suited to sand, gravel or topsoil material extraction operations.

Ground Water

Shallow supplies of ground water in the area are troubled with contamination, such as by nitrates. Deep supplies have problems of alkalinity. Community water supplies are in a better position to find and or treat water than individual systems.

Other Natural and Environmental Features

Significant stands of natural trees occur with few exceptions along the channel of Haines Branch. Protection of the flood prone area will also save many tree stands.

The Rosekrans Site, an archeological site, is ² located approximately one mile southwest of Denton.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS

To be effective, the Comprehensive Plan must respond to the special needs, values, and desires of local residents. The locally-prepared Community Development Goals provide this special guidance. In essence, these goals transform collective community values into operational statements which can be used as guidelines for the planning program.

The Comprehensive Plan responds to the adopted Community Development Goals, listed in Appendix 2. Specific goal statements are referred to throughout this plan document.

¹ Lancaster County Health Department limits the use of individual lagoons to building sites over three acres.

² A Survey of Historic, Architectural and Archeological Sites in the Eastern Nebraska Urban Region, July, 1971.